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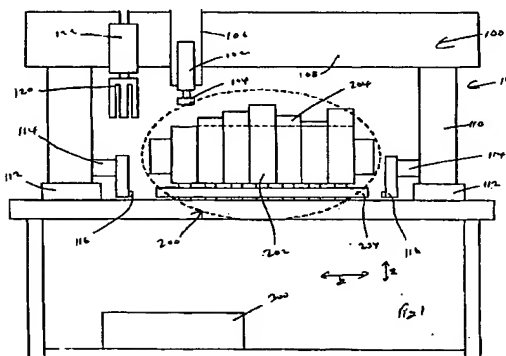
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- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **SURFACE GENERATION LTD [GB/GB]**; 1B Centurian Business Park, Sturrock Way, Bretton, Peterborough PE3 8YF (GB).
- (72) Inventor; and
- (75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): **HALFORD, Ben, John [GB/GB]**; 7 Redland Close, Barrowden, Rutland, Leicestershire LE15 8ES (GB).
- (74) Agents: **STAGG, Diana, C. et al.**; Marks & Clerk, 144 New Walk, Leicester LE1 7JA (GB).
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(54) Title: RECONFIGURABLE WORKPIECE SUPPORT



(57) Abstract: A tooling system comprises a plurality of elongate elements (202) each having an upper surface, said elements being arranged in an array to present said upper surfaces for machining by cutting tool means (104); support means (234) for supporting said elements, each said element being supported on said support means for axial movement between upper and lower positions relative to the other elements in the array thereby to enable adjustment of the vertical position of said element surface; and clamping means (114) for clamping the array of elements in a closed position in which the elements contact one another for enabling the free ends of the elements to be machined to produce a desired surface contour. A method of tooling using such a tooling system comprises storing existing data representing the contour of the surface of each element including the z values of the surface at any given x,y coordinate point relative to a datum; storing new data representing a desired contour for the surface of each element position in the array including the z values of the surface at said any given x,y coordinate point relative to said datum; comparing said new data for a first, selected element position with the existing data for a first element in said selected element position; and adjusting the height of said first element to adjust said z values of said existing data at said any given x,y coordinate point to values at least equal to said z values; of said new data at said any given x,y coordinate point.



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